Preface: As our Texas A&M community adapts to this new environment of learning, teaching, working, and connecting virtually, it is imperative that our Diversity Plan goals of accountability, campus climate, and equity remain at the forefront of all our decisions. To put a finer point on the issue, particularly in times of crisis, we must ensure that all existing and planned policies, operations, procedures, and major plans for organizational change continue to be pursued with careful attention to their impact on our diversity, inclusion, and accessibility goals.

For the 2020-2021 Diversity Plan Accountability Report, the Office for Diversity is balancing the need to track and collect longitudinal data and narratives with the need to understand current, and sometimes unique, challenges and strategies presented by social distancing and the pandemic. Please use the 2020-2021 Diversity Plan Accountability Report as a tool to document and share your unit’s strategies, plans, challenges, and successes advancing diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in 2020.

Instructions: The purpose of this report is to assess the continuing progress towards diversity and inclusion at the college and division-level. Please review your unit’s strategic plans, diversity plans, and assessment plans for goals, data-informed actions, and strategies addressing diversity, recruitment, retention, campus climate, and equity. Where appropriate, use specific examples from individual departments in your unit to provide evidence for your narrative regarding progress towards Texas A&M University’s Diversity Plan goals: Accountability, Campus Climate, and Equity.

Formatting: Use portrait orientation and 12-point font or larger for the narrative, tables, and figures. Word limits are provided for each of the six sections. Please note: References, graphics, footnotes, and tables for demographic data are not included in the word count.

1. Introduction (200-word limit):

The Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Strategic Initiatives unit consists of six programs:
Aggie Honor System Office
Office for Academic Innovation
Office for Student Success
Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Evaluation
Provost Communications
*Undergraduate Studies (provides separate accountability report due to size and complexity).

The mission of Academic Affairs & Strategic Initiatives is to support exceptional quality programs and facilitate the overall educational experience of all students through supporting Texas A&M University’s faculty, staff, and students. The five offices referenced in this report are located on the College Station campus but support all branch campuses and locations, and currently employ 60 staff members. In the past year, the offices hired an additional 24 employees.
The demographics of the new hires are as follows:
13 females and 11 males
2 Asian, 4 Black, 8 Hispanic, and 10 White.

The demographics for the unit as a whole are:
41 females and 19 males
3 Asian, 7 Black, 13 Hispanic, 1 Native American, 1 Two or More Races, and 35 White.

2. **Recruitment (500-word limit):**

The unit focuses on hiring individuals of diverse backgrounds, towards a goal of at least 25% of employees being from underrepresented populations. Twenty-four employees were hired to the unit, 12 from underrepresented populations (50.0%). Forty-two percent (41.7%) of employees in the unit identify as non-White. The DiverseJobs platform was used to advertise openings to reach as many potential applicants as possible. The brand-new Office for Student Success was the office that had the most hires in the past year and was intentional about recruitment, including bias training for those leading searches. Moving forward, the unit wants to maintain that at least 25% of any new hires are from underrepresented populations.

3. **Retention (500-word limit):**

The unit had two goals for retention. First, formalize a mentorship program for all of their new hires. This goal proved challenging since many of the units had multiple hires. The second goal was to have scheduled times within the respective offices to debrief on diversity trainings. However, the pandemic caused major shifts to accommodate online learning, remote working, and campus communications related to COVID-19. Mentoring and scheduling multiple diversity trainings were not possible, though one diversity training was held prior to the pandemic. The Aggie Honor System Office was successful in debriefing about the event, which was accomplished through one-on-one meetings.

Next year, offices within the unit are committed to evaluating the diversity trainings. The unit would also like to work with Human Resources (HR) to set up an acceptable exit interviewing protocol or partner with HR to provide exit interviews.

4. **Climate (500-word limit):**

The unit wanted to focus on building community within their specific offices through hosting team-building workshops. The Aggie Honor System Office and the Office for Student Success both held team-building workshops since there were many employee changes. The Office for Institutional Evaluation and Effectiveness consistently had office gatherings to build community. Offices that utilized team-building workshops reported being more cohesive, more aware of individual strengths,
and better knowledge of their peers. While other offices did not host team-building workshops, they remained close through lunch or social gatherings to celebrate life events. Overall, offices reported positive climates. The Office for Student Success began hosting town halls to discuss issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Next year the unit is committed to establishing a Climate, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee, with representatives from each reporting office. The committee will be responsible for:

- coordinating quarterly unit meetings designed to foster climate and inclusion
- assisting in gathering information to be included in the diversity report which will be given to the AACDC liaison to write
- reviewing data related to recruitment, retention, climate, and equity
- developing proposed data-informed actions (i.e., recommendations) for consideration by the Vice Provost Leadership Team (VPLT)
- facilitating the implementation of actions approved by the VPLT

Additionally, this committee will coordinate and host gatherings focused on social justice issues. The division wants to increase the number of events from 3 annually to 4.

5. **Equity (500-word limit):**

Two equity adjustments were reported across the unit last year. Supervisors will utilize reports provided by Academic Affairs Business Services to evaluate all employees for equity increases where merited, understanding the current budget constraints due to COVID-19.

6. **Reflection (800-word limit):**

The Office for Student Success is helping to move the needle through creating a Diversity and Inclusion committee. In addition to hosting a town hall to address issues regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion, the committee published a statement against racism and encouraged diversity on their website. This is an important step in communicating with the community and campus constituents that racism will not be tolerated.

The Vice Provost for Leadership team has established the goal of creating a Climate, Diversity, and Inclusion committee to coordinate regular trainings, collect and monitor data related to diversity, climate, and inclusion, and recommend action needed to achieve goals related to the annual diversity report. Such a committee can serve as a blueprint to establish similar structures throughout the five different offices within the unit, building capacity, and a network of invested stakeholders.

The biggest challenge of the past year was the pandemic, which brought very large changes after spring break. However, the tremendous amount of work and adaptability of the staff to continue our educational mission was inspiring. While in-person gatherings were canceled, offices worked to ensure that our most vulnerable students and staff were accommodated. Our commitment to our students and staff continues, especially amid times of increased stress and work-life balance.
The pandemic only increased the focus on racial inequalities along with the death of George Floyd and the re-emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement. Texas A&M University was not immune, as multiple protests occurred to debate the placement of statues and systemic racism. We remain hopeful that the Presidential Commission will provide healing on campus and to our students, staff, and faculty that remain very much underrepresented on our campus.

These challenges, in a mostly remote environment with increased workloads, prevented the unit from achieving some of the 2019-2020 goals.

2021 Presentation Guidelines

1) The 2021 presentations to the President’s Council on Climate and Diversity; the President of Texas A&M; the Provost; and university leadership, are scheduled for February 19, 2021, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm, in the Memorial Student Center (MSC) Room 2406. Presentations are strictly limited to 10 minutes for content and 5 minutes for questions from President Young, Provost Fierke, the President’s Council on Climate and Diversity (PCCD) members, and university leadership.

2) The purpose of your presentation is to describe how your unit is progressing on Texas A&M’s 2010 University Diversity Plan goals of accountability, campus climate, and equity. Because of the strict time limit, prioritize goals, data-informed actions, and strategies that have the greatest impact on, or the potential to impact, student, faculty and/or staff recruitment, retention, campus climate, and/or equity. Please structure your presentation as follows:

   a) Describe your unit (campus location, demographics of students/faculty/staff, departments, etc.) and its general mission.
   b) Describe goals and strategies that have the greatest impact on, or the potential to impact, student, faculty and/or staff recruitment, retention, campus climate, and/or equity. Describe how strategies implemented in your unit might be useful to other units.
   c) What challenges has your unit faced? Specifically, acknowledge the impact of the responses to COVID-19 on your unit’s diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.
   d) Describe how funding from the Diversity Plan awards has been used (or will be used) to support and advance your unit’s recruitment, retention, climate, and/or equity goals.

3) In addition to the presentation, you can submit a single-sheet, front-and-back, summary of your 2020 Diversity Plan Accountability Report. In the past, units have used the single sheet to provide demographic information, tables, and graphics that enhance and support your February 19, 2021 presentation.
4) If you use a video in your presentation, please provide captioning. Your Power Point presentation and single-sheet summary (pdf) are due to the Office for Diversity by **noon on January 20, 2021**. Please email the materials to Jennifer McGee Reyes at jlreyes@tamu.edu.